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From: bounce-274047-5580627@listserv.state.ma.us on behalf of Skahen, Mary (EHS)
<Mary.Skahen@state.ma.us>
Sent: Monday, January 03, 2011 4:48 PM
To: Hanchett, James (DPH)
Subject: A Message from Secretary Bigby

Dear Colleagues:

2011 is upon us and I want to express my sincere thanks for the work you do every day serving Massachusetts residents who rely on us for quality services that enrich their lives.

Despite a challenging economic year, there are many accomplishments to celebrate, locally and nationally that we contributed to. Here are just a few of our agencies' many achievements.

- The Affordable Care Act was signed into law by President Obama on March 23, 2010. The law, modeled in large part on Massachusetts' health system, puts in place comprehensive health insurance reforms for everyone in the nation. Massachusetts continues to lead the nation in health care coverage, with 98.1% insured.
- The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) unveiled a state-of-the-art motor vehicle equipped with adaptive evaluation and training devices that will help promote independence and employment for people with disabilities.
- MassHealth members who used a smoking cessation benefit made available through the Commonwealth saw a decrease in the risk of heart attack hospitalizations by 46%.
- In the past year alone, MassHealth enrolled 20,000 more children.
- Participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) has increased by more than 90,000 individuals in the past year, an increase of 308% more households since FY02.
- Since 2006, the number of youth "stuck" in hospitals has decreased by 40%.
- From 2006 to 2009, DYS has reduced the number of youth in detention by 35%.
- Closure of the Fernald Development Center is almost complete, with 201 outplacements to date.
- There have been 420 community placements from nursing facilities to date under the Rolland settlement.
- We have initiated two new waivers for adults with Acquired Brain Injury.
- Over 3,200 individuals with significant disabilities have been placed into competitive integrated employment.

We also have many exciting challenges in the year ahead. Governor Patrick's second term will move ahead with the Administration's efforts to support job creation, contain health care costs, and close the educational achievement gap. I encourage you to think about and submit your innovative ideas for ways to achieve the Commonwealth's goals in these and other areas. Let us share Governor Patrick's resolve to leave the state even better than we found it.

I thank you again for your hard work and dedication. Best wishes for a happy and healthy 2011.

JudyAnn Bigby, M.D.

JudyAnn Bigby, M.D.
Secretary, Executive Office of Health and Human Services
One Ashburton Place, Suite 1109
Boston, MA 02108

617 573-1800

Assistant: Mary Skahen (mary.skahen@state.ma.us